

## Megafisherman

Arun San pulled in his father's tattered fishing net. "Every day is the same on the Mekong River," he said. "My nets are empty and my belly is, too."

Laughter and teasing erupted from the crowd on the shore. "This river is full of fish!" a buyer scoffed. "And you could not catch one?"

Arun's face burned. He had borrowed money to buy his boat. If he didn't make the payments, the lender would take his boat away.

"How will I ever provide for my mother?" Arun wondered. He tethered his boat and grabbed his camera, his most prized possession. It had been a gift from his father before he died. "I didn't catch fish today, but at least I caught images," Arun said.

Before dawn, Arun went to a secluded spot and let down his net.

"Maybe I'll have better luck here," he said. While he waited, he snapped photos of the tangerine-colored sunrise and the rolling hills covered in morning mist.

After adjusting his net, his boat gave a hard lurch.

"I've caught something!" Arun exclaimed, pulling up the net. With each tug, the boat rocked and took in water. Sweat poured off Arun's forehead, and his muscles shook.

Then, the tension in the net eased. Gliding to the surface of the river was the most massive stingray Arun had ever seen. Arun drew in a sharp breath, and grabbed his camera with one hand.

As quickly as he could, he snapped photo after photo. Arun had heard of the mega fish in the Mekong River, but no one he knew had ever seen one.

Arun opened the net and set the stingray free. With a few graceful movements, it vanished.

Back on shore, Arun ignored the laughter and pointing fingers of the other fishermen. He ignored the threats of the lender. He ignored the growl of his stomach. On his camera, he had proof that he had just caught and released the largest, heaviest stingray in the world. And with the photos, he now had a way he could provide.

## Ready, Set, Invent!

"I can't believe the Young Inventors' National Competition is tomorrow!" Marina said. "I hope I'm ready."

"Well, you've worked hard, and you have a great invention," her dad said. "I think you're more than ready."

Marina scooped up her invention, the Scoreball, from its stand. She had invented it to solve the problem of keeping score during fast-moving basketball games.

The Scoreball recorded points whenever it dropped through the hoop. It stopped arguments and made playing more fun for Marina and her friends. Marina had come in first with the Scoreball at other events, but there was a lot more at stake with the national competition. The top prize was a college scholarship.

Marina knew that it would be a battle. Another inventor named Dana Dutcher had won plenty of awards with her own invention. Tomorrow they would meet and compete, face-to-face.

Meanwhile, Dana Dutcher helped tie the shoes of her triplet brothers. Soon, her family would be piling in the van for the long drive to the Young Inventors' National Competition.

She gave each of her little brothers a high five. "I owe you guys," she said. "You gave me the idea for the Zipper-Zapper in the first place."

Last winter, Dana's teacher had told the class to think of a problem and an invention that would solve it. Every morning, Dana had watched her brothers struggling to zip their own coats. Because of them, she designed a magnetic zipper starter that made zipping easier for little hands. The Zipper-Zapper had worked.

It had racked up awards, too, but the national competition was different. The top prize was a college scholarship that Dana didn't just want to win. She needed to win it. Dana had read about the inventor she was up against. Marina Moore and her Scoreball had her worried.